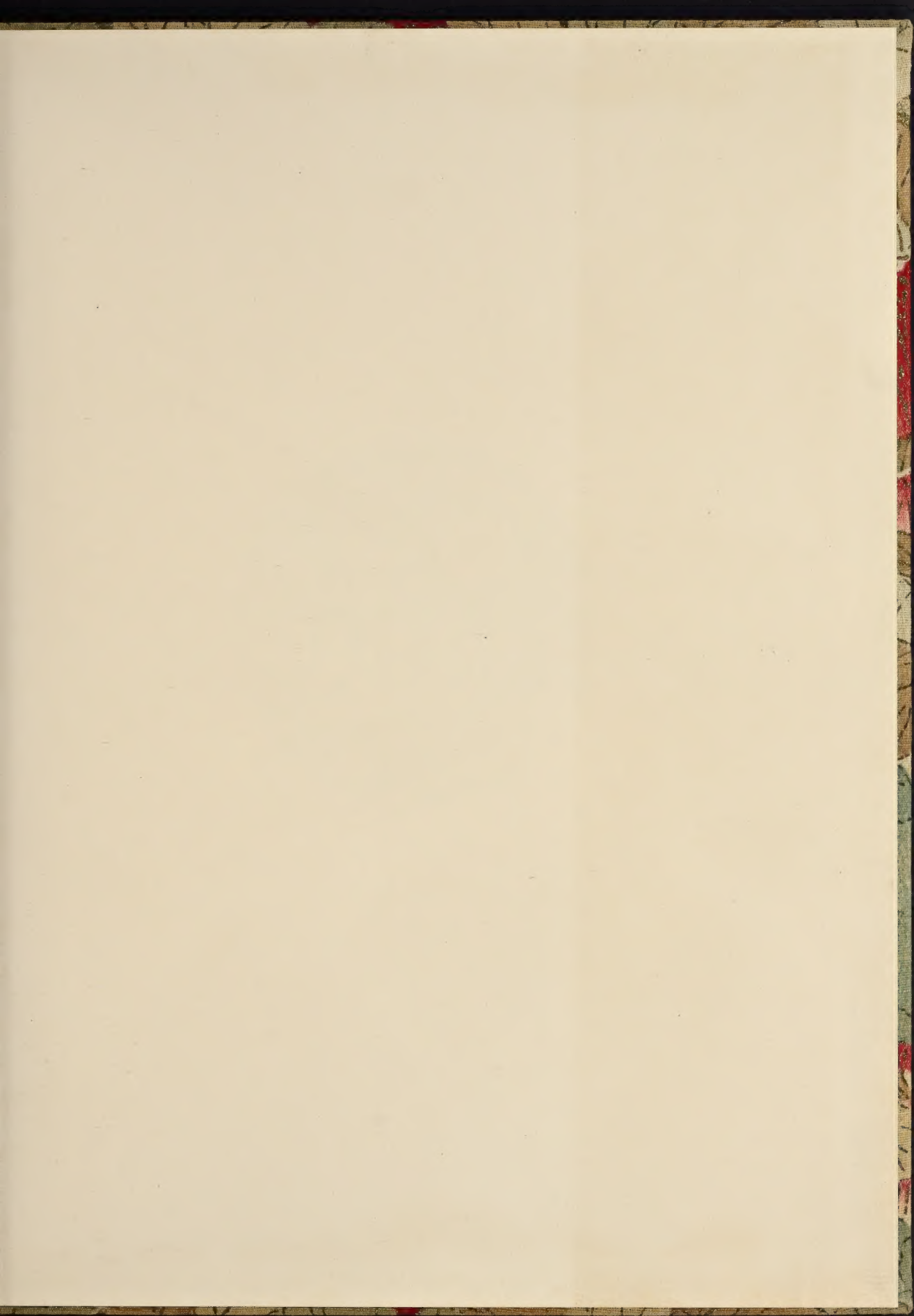




J A P A N







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VII.

YOSHITSUNE, GENGHIS AND THE MONGOL INVASION.

(Concluded.)



YORITOMO had been laid in his grave on the summit of a hill overlooking the city that his power had created, before the conquests of Genghis began to attract attention beyond the limits of the remote region where they commenced. He had given to his country ten years of peace and good government, blessings rare at that epoch; he had earned the gratitude of the farmer and the artisan by liberal patronage; he had substituted the verdicts of duly constituted tribunals for the arbitrary dicta of territorial magnates; and he had left behind him the reputation of a brave and energetic man, just and clear-sighted in all his dealings. He died in 1199, and sixty-nine years later there arrived at Dazaifu, the seat of local government in Kiushu, an envoy from Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis. Kublai had by that time established himself at Cambaluc (Pekin), and commenced the celebrated siege of Shianyang, soon to be followed by the great campaign down the Yangtze and the fall of Nanking. It is a singular fact that at one period of his career Kublai, suspected of disloyalty, was deprived of his command by his elder brother, and at another had to take the field against his younger, thus repeating in his own person the combined experiences of Yoshitsune and Yoritomo. If Genghis may be identified with Yoshitsune, it would seem that the blood of the Minamoto had a hereditary taint of treachery, for while the house of the Manchu conqueror was divided against itself in China the maternal relatives of Yoritomo in Japan were conspiring to oust his descendants from the place of pre-eminence he had bequeathed to them. Kublai's despatch of an envoy to Japan seems to have been dictated by pure ambition. It has been suggested that piratical raids made from Tsushima against the Koreans, whom he now numbered among his subjects, impelled him to take steps for bringing Japan within the pale of his authority. But that theory is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the Koreans themselves were the means of dissuading the first Mongol ambassadors (1266) from continuing their journey to Kiushu. The most reasonable conclusion is that Kublai resented the independent attitude maintained since the ninth century by an insignificant little island empire lying almost within sight of his own dominions. His message was unceremonious. Couched in language more peremptory than polite, it asked Japan to open relations with the great Mongol Court on terms closely resembling those of vassalage. The Japanese

resolved to send no reply. Again and again Kublai repeated his message; again and again he failed to elicit any response. Yet, if what he asked was difficult for Japan to grant, he certainly did not proceed to enforce his demand until it had become unmistakable that in order to include the Japanese among his tributaries he must first conquer them. The Japanese, on their side, did not misapprehend the result that the irresolution must involve. They understood the might of the power they were defying, and they proceeded to set their house in order.

We have aids other than mere written annals to expound this memorable incident in Japan's career. Simultaneously with the inauguration of the military, or Kamakura, epoch there grew up a style of painting known as the *Tosariu*. Its artists took for subjects the martial scenes that came under their daily observation. From the point of view of high art not much can be said for their achievements, but the practical fidelity of their work is unquestionable. At the time of which we write two of the leaders of the new school were Tosa-no Nagataka and Kono Nagaakira. To these men the task of depicting the incidents of the Mongol invasion was intrusted by Suyenaga, a *samurai*, who, in company with three members of the Toneyasu family, had rendered notable service against the invaders. Nagataka and Nagaakira painted two scrolls, each a dozen yards long, with marginal references to the subjects of the pictures. The scrolls exist to-day. They tell us much about the ways and weapons of warfare six hundred years ago.

The time (1268) of the arrival of Kublai's first envoy was separated by six years from the time (1274) when his forces appeared off the shores of Japan. The Japanese devoted that interval to preparation. They could foresee pretty accurately at what point the storm would burst, and they fortified the whole of the vulnerable parts of the northern coast of Kiushu according to the engineering lights of those days. It was a simple process. All along the shore the heights were crowned with a low parapet of loose stones, and at places where the configuration of the ground did not afford the necessary elevation, embankments were raised to support the parapet. The latter varied in height from two feet to six, so as to afford complete shelter while, at the same time, allowing bowmen to use their weapons freely. The trace showed no idea of flank defence; shelter seemed to have been the sole object. For weapons the defenders had swords, glaives and bows, the last of two kinds, namely, an ordinary bow from five to seven and a half feet long and a crossbow. Tradition says that the crossbow came originally from Korea in the year 617 A. D. It was a powerful weapon, generally drawn by two men specially selected on account of their thews; but sometimes the united force of ten or fifteen men was required, and there is a record of one particularly strong crossbow for the service of which no less than a hundred soldiers were told off. It does not appear that any remarkable accuracy was achieved with this weapon. The *samurai* preferred the common bow, in the use of which he often showed great skill. Nevertheless bands of crossbowmen were stationed at all the important points along the coast.

Kublai evidently under-estimated the resistance that his troops were likely to

encounter in Japan, a fact difficult to reconcile with the hypothesis that his grandfather was Yoshitsune. The first messenger sent from the south to inform the Court in Kyoto of the coming of the Mongol army of invasion spoke vaguely of "several thousands of war-ships," and his report found its way into annals in which some historians place credit. But estimates evidently more accurate put the number of vessels at from 300 to 400, from which it may be inferred that the fighting force aggregated from thirty to forty thousand men, a small army to despatch on such an errand. The ships had been built in Korea by order of Kublai, and a considerable contingent of Koreans joined the expedition. On the 12th of November in the year 1274 they appeared off the island of Tsushima. Neither there nor at Iki, an island lying still nearer the shores of Japan, did they encounter any serious resistance, and on the 25th of the same month they reached Imazu, in Chikuzen, a littoral province on the north of Kiushu. Two days previously intelligence of the invasion had been received in Kyoto, but no resource then remained except to trust to the local troops and make due supplication to heaven, which last function was discharged with the utmost zeal and munificence, to the considerable enrichment of the shrines and the discontent of people who did not fully share the Imperial Court's confidence in supernatural agencies. As to what happened at the scene of the invasion in Kiushu, while litanies were chanted and incense burned at the great fanes in and around Kyoto, we have an account compiled in the year 1289 by Sadahide, chief official at the shrine of Hakozaki, where the Japanese forces had their headquarters. Sadahide called his composition "Gudoki," that is to say, a poor or vulgar record, because, being intended for the perusal of the multitude, it was written with the Japanese syllabary, the script of the illiterate, instead of being transcribed in perplexing ideographs which would have rendered it unintelligible to the great mass of military men in an age when the pursuit of martial exercises ranked incomparably higher than the study of literature.

For the sake of the interest attaching to the style of such a history, composed on the



A JAPANESE BARBER.

very battlefield by one who had witnessed the events of which he wrote, and for the sake also of Sadahide's facts, which, after all, represent the sum of our written information, we translate the passages of the *Gudoki* that directly concern the invasion: "On the 19th day of the tenth month of the eleventh year of *Bunyei* (25th November, 1274) the *Moko* fleet reached Imazu, in Chikuzen, and advanced, land forces and sea forces. On the 20th the van effected a landing, and, mounting horses, marched to the onset with colors flying. Suketoki, a lad of twelve or thirteen, grandson of General Kakuye, fired a *kokabura*" (a species of toy arrow that hummed as it passed through the air) "by way he said of crossing arrows with the enemy; whereat the *Moko* men raised a chorus of laughter and, beating drums, sounding gongs and shouting, came on with a stupendous din. The arrows that they shot were short; but the tips being poisoned, a wound received from them was deadly. Hundreds of archers were marshalled in front of the foe, shooting volleys of arrows that fell as thick as rain. If any man drew near to attack them, they opened their ranks, enclosed him and slew him, and when a man fell they slashed him open, tore out his liver and ate it. A nation that habitually takes delight in eating the flesh of oxen and horses, they did not confine themselves to men's livers, but made a meal of the horses also that they shot. Their armor was light, their horsemanship good, their muscle excellent, and they seemed to set no value on their lives. Their commanding officer directed operations from an eminence. Drums gave the signal for advance, and drums also gave the signal for retiring. When in retreat they fired iron balls containing fire, from machines to which the name of *teppo*" (thereafter used to designate guns) "was given. The discharge of these was accompanied by a great din, and when they burst on striking, fire flew in all directions and the air was blackened with smoke. Many of our folk perished on account of these weapons. The Japanese soldiers had expected to fight according to their custom; that is to say, one man at a time advancing, declaring his name and engaging in single combat with one of the other side. But the invaders' method was to work in combination, bearing down an assailant by force of numbers and killing him or taking him prisoner. After a time no Japanese was found willing to brave such tactics. Matura's men, who displayed conspicuous courage, were nearly all struck down.

"It was at this time that Yamada, a soldier who had saved his life by running and who was chagrined to have done so, drew a bow and killed two of the enemy; whereat the Japanese raised a chorus of laughter, but the *Moko* men retreated beyond range without a sound. Nevertheless, they grew steadily stronger, and pushed on as far as Akasaka, taking thousands of prisoners. Kikuchi Jiro, at the head of about a hundred horsemen, charged them desperately, with the result that the whole of his following were slain, he himself alone returning alive from among the corpses. None any longer offered to fight the invaders. At this juncture, there was observed among the *Moko* a huge man, some seven feet high, who appeared to be their general. His beard reached to his waist; he wore red armor and rode a chestnut horse. The Japanese commander, Kagesuke, took note of this prominent figure, and

summoning one of his soldiers noted for skill in archery, bade him shoot at the big stranger. The arrow flew true to its mark, and the great man tumbled prone. Another of the enemy's men, who also rode a chestnut horse and had a saddle with gold trappings, was captured about the same time by our people, and from him it was learned that the tall man commanded the *Moko* and that his name was Liu. The Japanese now advanced in full strength, and the enemy, abandoning Hakozaki, retired *pêle-mêle*, by the light of numerous conflagrations. That night a great storm swept down, and the main part of the enemy's fleet suffered shipwreck, more than 13,500 of them losing their lives. The rest fled."

The picture that the above account presents of Japanese fighting tactics in the thirteenth century is very instructive. Evidently no attempt was made to oppose the landing of the invaders; the moment of supreme danger for an army carried over sea to the attack of a foreign country was suffered to pass wholly unutilized. Such negligence will, at first sight, seem attributable to the fact that the Japanese were entirely without experience in repelling onsets from abroad. But though they had never suffered invasion, they had often played the part of invaders; and if, in their various raids against Korea, they had been taught anything about the perils of landing in the face of a hostile force they would certainly have turned the lesson to advantage on the occasion of the coming of the Mongols. The inevitable inference is that naval warfare was practically unknown in Japan and Korea at the time of which we write, and that the fundamental principles of coast defence had not yet been recognized. We see, too, that strategy and tactics had not emerged from an infant state. A field of battle resembled a monster fencing match. Men fought as individuals, not as units of a tactical formation, and the engagement consisted of a number of personal



WINTER SCENE IN YOKOHAMA.

duels, all in simultaneous progress. In that respect the Mongols were greatly superior; they knew how to combine their strength. There is an English tradition about a certain Scotchman who, totally innocent of the etiquette of the fencing salon, clove the skull of a polished French challenger before the latter had concluded the elaborate salute that should have

preceded the real business of fighting. The Japanese had a similar experience at Imazu. It must have been a grim surprise for the polite *samurai* when, in answer to his punctilious proclamation of his names and titles, a mass of unscrupulous Mongols set upon him and hacked him down, instead of the single adversary for whose leisurely and dignified advance he had prepared himself. But for the storm that wrought such havoc on that winter night, the island of Kiushu might have been conquered by the Mongols, as Tsushima and Iki had already been conquered.

Kublai was not deterred by this reverse. The force he had directed against Kiushu constituted but a small fraction of his military potentialities. He had now an immense number of troops at his disposal, owing to the conclusion of his campaign against the *Sung* dynasty, and he prepared to beat Japan to her knees. His renewal of warlike operations was prefaced, however, by fresh attempts to open friendly relations with the island empire. Six months after the shattered remnants of his fleet had escaped from Imazu he sent another envoy with instructions to insist upon a reception at Kyoto or Kamakura, instead of remaining in Kiushu and forwarding the documents he carried, as his predecessors had been obliged to do. The envoy's demand was conceded. He reached Kamakura, had audience of Tokimune, and was then led out to the seashore and decapitated. Among the "lions" of modern Kamakura is the place where To Se-chung's head rolled on the sand. Still Kublai did not proceed to extremities. He waited four years, and then (1279) once more sent two new envoys, Cheu and Lwan. They were beheaded without even the preliminary satisfaction of travelling to Kyoto or Kamakura. The patient magnanimity displayed by Kublai in this matter was so inconsistent with the usages of his era that a special motive suggests itself. Was Japan something more to him than a mere outlying and defiant section of eastern Asia, where vast tracts of territory and powerful peoples had already come under his sceptre? It is true that Kublai was a man of admirable clemency when the quality could be safely exercised. His treatment of his younger brother, who disputed his succession, may be cited as an example of wise mercy, rare in the records of victorious races just emerging from a condition of semi-barbarism. But his conduct toward Japan seems to defy measurement by any ordinary standard of forbearance. His fruitless efforts to establish amicable relations extended over a period of seven years. During that interval he sent envoy after envoy to the island empire. History records the arrival of six embassies, and speaks vaguely of several others. Never once did the Japanese vouchsafe an answer, and finally they accentuated their insulting silence by beheading the envoys. Yet for four years longer Kublai quietly put aside not only the memory of his first defeat, an affair too insignificant to deter fresh effort, but also the spectacle of his slaughtered ambassador, and at the end of those four years he sent another embassy to experience similarly ferocious treatment in Japan. His conduct was certainly suggestive. As for the Japanese, the nature of the intercourse proposed by Kublai explains their rejection of it. They were asked to become tributaries of the

Mongol empire, and they declined. If their method of signifying refusal became savage at the end, it was doubtless because they had failed to find any other method conclusive. After all, when a stranger persists in conveying unwelcome proposals and, despite the return of his unanswered missives, continues to send replicas by fresh delegates, the prompting of first principles is to make the messenger suffer for the master's importunity.

On June 10, 1281, the advance squadron of the second Mongol expedition made its appearance off Tsushima. It consisted of Korean vessels only. For more than a year Kublai had been collecting troops and transports in the harbors of Kiangsu, Fuhkien and Chekiang.



THRESHING GRAIN.

When his forces finally embarked they numbered, according to Chinese and Japanese annals, over a hundred thousand men; a mixed body consisting of Chinese and Mongols in the proportion of about three to one. These were to combine with a Korean contingent at the point of attack. The distance was traversed chiefly by rowing; sails do not seem to have been used except as auxiliaries. Large-decked boats, with very high prows and a clumsy capstan perched at the stern, were propelled by means of oars passed through holes in the sides. These craft had no apparatus for naval warfare except that the rowers were protected by bulwarks of timber and matting, and at the prow there was an arrangement of shields over which arrows could be shot. They carried some kind of artillery, but of its exact nature we have no details. An ancient Japanese record (*Kamakura-kudai-ki*), generally counted trustworthy, says that iron balls, twenty or thirty at a time, were discharged from the Chinese vessels, with a thunder-like detonation, and that they inflicted heavy loss upon the Japanese, striking down numbers of men, breaching the parapets and setting fire to the watch-towers. The invaders had thickly padded coats with ample skirts falling below the knee, and iron helmets from which depended curtains padded like their coats, hanging over the shoulders and fastened round the chin in front. The helmets of some of the officers were fine specimens of the armorer's craft, being forged of thin, tough metal richly inlaid with silver or gold. For weapons they carried bows, spears with broad triangular points,

useful for thrusting purposes only, and straight swords fastened to the girdle by two short slings. Such a costume must have greatly impeded freedom of motion, not to speak of its intolerable heat.

Artillery apart, the Japanese were more intelligently and effectively equipped for defensive and offensive purposes. Their armor, though heavy, did not form one piece. The brassarts and skirts were suspended loosely from the shoulders and waist, and even the hauberk was not solid, the general system being a flexible combination of metal plates and links. On horseback the *bushi's* feet were partly protected by heavy metal stirrups shaped like a high-low boot with the sides pared away. The bows, from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 feet long, were of great strength, and nearly every warrior, whether mounted or on foot, carried one,—skill in archery being the *samurai's* proudest achievement next to dexterous swordsmanship. Of the Japanese sword it is scarcely necessary to speak. Already at the time of which we write it had become the splendidly keen, deadly weapon now famed throughout the world, and its superiority to the light, poorly tempered Chinese blade was as marked as the superiority of a modern rifle to a mediæval arquebus. Something similar may be said of the glaive. It has been common to speak of Japanese spearmen, but, in truth, the spear as a thrusting weapon never found much favor in Japan. A long glaive with crescent-shaped blade, the convex edge sharpened to the keenness of a razor, was the *bushi's* arm, and its manipulation for slashing rather than stabbing purposes had developed into a fine art. But the very excellence of his weapons and the value that they derived from the strength and expertness of their wielder spoiled the battle tactics of the *samurai* in mediæval days. Individual skill ranked far above massed movements, and the science of combination seemed of less importance than the vindication of personal prowess.

For maritime warfare the Japanese were conspicuously ill-equipped. Their boats were puny affairs compared with those of the Chinese. No protection of any kind was provided for the rowers; they worked in a group at the stern, and in retreat must have been exposed to the full brunt of the enemy's missiles. It is plain that, up to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, no idea of naval fighting existed in Japan. If boats were used, they served merely for transport purposes, whether the aim was a raid upon an enemy's coast or the boarding of his vessel.

It may easily be supposed that when the Japanese government resorted to the decapitation of Kublai's envoys by way of response to his overtures, it spared no efforts to meet the onset which such a challenge must provoke. Large bodies of troops were massed in the north of Kiushu, and distinguished members of the Hojo clan proceeded thither to direct the defences. The Korean contingent of the invaders having arrived first at the rendezvous, had to await the coming of the Chinese fleet, and in the interval they undertook a wholesale massacre of the inhabitants of Tsushima and Iki. Neither sex nor age constituted a title to mercy. Japanese history notes with grim brevity that the women and children of Iki fled

BAMBOO GROVE NEAR KYOTO.

The practical value of the bamboo to the people of Japan has been almost incalculable. It may be said to be the warp of their ancient civilization, for if the bamboo had been suddenly withdrawn much of the fabric would have fallen to pieces. It is still used in countless ways, and therefore it is carefully cultivated, so that many picturesque groves adorn the roadsides throughout the country. The bamboo is a symbol of virtue, fidelity and constancy.



to the mountains, but were tracked to their hiding places by the sound of the babies' crying. We translate again from the *Hachiman Gudoki*: "Five hundred Korean boats, forming the van, arrived at Iki on June 10. Matsura's troops engaged them, and there were many killed and wounded on both sides. The invaders' fleet pushed forward to Munakata in Chikuzen, and on the

25th of June the Yuan armada appeared off the islands of Shiga and Noko in Chikuzen, where it was joined by the Korean squadron. Meanwhile the Kiushu troops assembled, and the archers formed up to repel the invasion, but owing to scarcity of provisions many of them lacked strength to draw a bow. The first to



SPINNING COTTON.

attack the enemy were the Oyano brothers, Taro and Saburo. Embarking in two boats, they boarded the enemy's vessels, set them on fire and came back with twenty-one heads. Five or six of the *Moko* vessels and many of their crews perished in the flames. Thereafter they moored their ships together and kept strict guard, the whole being protected by catapults rigged in the larger vessels, from which heavy stones were discharged to the speedy destruction of the small boats used by the Japanese soldiers. Night attacks had ultimately to be abandoned, and a general engagement awaited.

"It was then that Kono Rokuro, a *samurai* of Iyo province, headed a boat for the centre of the *Moko* fleet. The enemy, who were prepared for the assault, discharged a flight of arrows and stones, killing four or five of their assailants. Kono's uncle, the lord of Hoki, was struck by a stone from a catapult on the left side of the neck and incapacitated for using a bow. Wielding his sword with one hand, he cut down a mast, and using it as a bridge, leaped on board the *Moko* vessel and slashed right and left. The party carried back a number of heads, and also a big man who seemed to be high in command and who wore a jewel on his helmet.

"The *Kurando*, Otomo, also led a band of thirty men against the fleet, and destroyed several vessels, killing a number of the invaders. After that, most of those who engaged in night attacks lost their lives, but the *Moko*, much discomfited, drew off, and changed the scene of

operations to Takashima in Hizen.¹ The Japanese now projected an assault on a large scale, and their forces began to converge for the purpose. But scarcity of provisions and the absence of any general authorized to assume command in chief of the mixed army impeded their operations. At that supreme moment prayers were offered to the tutelary divinity



ROOM IN TEA HOUSE AT YUMOTO.

of Hakozaki, who had vouchsafed aid on the occasion of the previous invasion, and while worship was going on a messenger arriving from the island of Shiga reported that during the night of Aug. 21 a violent northerly gale had sprung up, so that on the 22d the enemy's fleet was completely shattered. Before the storm burst, a green dragon had raised its head from the

waves. Simultaneously with its appearance, sulphurous flames filled the firmament, and flying from the awful apparition, the vessel of the *Moko* commander-in-chief was dashed ashore at Ura-no-fuki in Nagato. The ships of his followers fared no better. The coast was piled high with corpses. Some thousands of the enemy, who had effected a landing on Takashima, repaired eighteen of their ships and attempted to escape over sea, but the troops of the western division under the command of Saburozayemon, embarking in over a hundred boats, cut them to pieces. Their heads were first gibbeted, and afterwards thrown to the fishes for food. The fealty of the men who wrought these deeds is hereby recorded, but the spectacle of that wholesale slaughter is indescribable. Yet, in order that the gracious tutelage of the deities of the divine country might be made known to the over-sea folk, three men were saved alive and sent home in a small boat. With regard to the great storm, it was raised by the united efforts of the deities of Usa-Hachiman-gu, Ise-Daijin-gu and Osaka Sumiyoshi-Jingu. There is none who does not worship the might and majesty of the gods."

This curious mixture of superstition and bravery constitutes an eloquent commentary on the morals and manners of the epoch. At first the writer of the record finds nothing to set down save the valorous deeds of common mortals. With unconscious veracity he leaves

¹ A radical change, for whereas they had been hitherto attempting to land on the northern coast of Kiushu, they now transferred their attack to the western coast. The Takashima here mentioned is not to be confounded, however, with the island of the same name near Nagasaki, famous for its coal mines.

wholly out of the account the deities, their storms, their green dragons and their sulphurous fumes, and describes the plain course of military events up to the temporary withdrawal of the baffled Mongol fleet. But it then becomes expedient for him to drag in the gods, and he therefore manufactures a necessity for their interference by drawing a picture of a leaderless and provisionless army and a situation hopeless without help from heaven. To understand the motives of this ancient annalist, we must turn our eyes for a moment to Kyoto. Thither, while the Oyano brothers, Kono, his stout uncle, and other *samurai* were dashing at the big fleet and rendering it powerless for offensive purposes, a messenger arrived post haste carrying a false announcement that the Mongols had borne down all resistance and were advancing toward the capital. The Emperor did not think of flying. He prayed. Attended by the principal court nobles, he went in person to worship at the shrine of the god of battles, sent an autographic supplication to be laid before the great fane in Ise, and solemnly vowed to sacrifice his life for the honor of his country. Never for one instant, by night or by day, did the burning of incense and the chanting of litanies cease at the chief temples and shrines throughout the empire. Immense sums were lavished on account of these services,—sums said to have been greater than those spent upon the war itself,—and after the Mongol fleet had been shattered and the invaders destroyed, it was not upon the brave men who saved the country that rewards were showered, but upon the Buddhist priests and *Shinto* officials, to the great discontent of the military nobles who imagined that the money might have been better employed in buying food for the nation's defenders and defraying the costs of the campaign. It is easy to see, by the light of these facts, why a tonsured scribe, writing within eight years of the events he recorded, found it expedient to give to the tutelary deities a prominent place in the last scene of the drama.



EATING MACARONI.

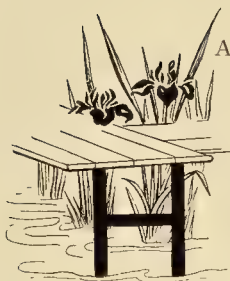
The story told by the *Gudoki* shows that the tactics of the Japanese underwent a complete change in the interval between the two Mongol invasions. On the first occasion no attempt was made to oppose the landing of the enemy, and in the engagements that

ensued the Japanese frittered away their strength by pursuing the disjointed methods of fighting peculiar to their own military canons. On the second occasion the Mongols, despite their artillery, their catapults and their great host, never succeeded in setting foot upon shore. Held at bay by a series of continuous and desperate attacks, insignificant as displays of national force, but of deadly efficacy and most harassing character, the huge fleet found nothing better than to lie huddled together, the big ships protecting the little, and the whole incapable of offensive action. It is the first and only historical instance of victory's resting with sword, spear and bow against gunpowder and bullet. Moreover, it illustrates two important phases of Japanese character—versatility and devoted courage. With the intuition of born soldiers the *samurai* saw that they must modify their methods, and not only abandon the old etiquette of the battle, but also play the part of assailants at whatever risk. Boat combats were not unfamiliar to them.

The great struggle at Dan-no-ura which decided the fate of the Taira clan had been fought chiefly on the water. No tricks of manœuvre came into play. The simple plan was to lay boat alongside boat, and commit the rest to sword and glaive. Such a programme was eminently effective against the comparatively inexpert and clumsily equipped Mongols and Chinese. From the moment that a skilled Japanese swordsman or glaivesman gained a footing in a ship crowded with soldiers of the kind that fought for Kublai, swift carnage followed inevitably. Yet certainly the highest order of valor presided at those onsets where one or two little boats, their occupants armed with bow, glaive and sword only, rowed out to attack a fleet of fifteen hundred vessels provided with culverins and catapults. The Tosa scrolls show us some of these boats dashing seaward on their reckless errand, and append the names of the *musha* seated in them, as well as the issue of each venture. In no case can more than ten fighting men be counted in one boat. Their wooden shields, when they carry such defences, hang over the gunwale; at the bow kneels the banner-bearer raising aloft a long white pennant, and in the stern half a dozen men, sometimes wearing hauberks, but generally without any protection whatever, bare-armed and bare-shouldered, strain desperately at the sculls. It must have been to their insignificant dimensions and the rapidity of their movements that these boats owed their frequent immunity from the balls of iron and stone discharged by the Chinese fleet. Men who had hearts stout enough for such ventures deserve the praise that posterity accords them as the saviours of their country's independence.

VIII.

CREEDS AND CASTES.



HAVING carried our readers sufficiently far into the realm of Japanese history to give them a general idea of the sequence of national events; of the gradual transfer of administrative power from the sovereign to the subject; of the rise of territorial magnates in mediæval times and their assertion of local autonomy; of the fiction that invested the throne with sanctity while subserving its influence to the ambitious purposes of its alleged defenders; of the centuries of sanguinary struggles that accompanied the development of military feudalism; of the fighting qualities and fine devotion of the Japanese soldier; of the overflow of his warlike impulses into neighboring countries, and of the great gulf that separated the wielder of the sword from the holder of the *soroban* (abacus), we turn to problems connected with the structure of society, the primitive creed of the nation and the manners and customs of the people. On the threshold of our retrospect we find lines of caste cleavage extending far back into the fabulous ages until they reach the Goddess of the Sun and the "August Progenitor and Progenitrix."

Japanese mythology has been treated by many writers with supercilious indifference. The growth of worlds in space, the separation of seas and lands by word of command, the creation of light and the genesis of all things, as recounted by Moses, make no smaller demand upon human credulity than do the cosmographical legends of primeval Japan. Yet to the former we devote centuries of thought and cycles of discussion, while we dismiss the latter with a note of exclamation. To Japanese mythology we must go, however, in search of materials to interpret a creed that has become instinctive among her people, and customs that have survived the onset of foreign fashions and alien philosophies.

The sequence of ideas that presided at the elaboration of the Japanese cosmogony is at once logical and illogical. Sometimes it shocks the most lenient intelligence; sometimes it surprises the most sceptical predisposition. In the beginning of all sentient things we have two supreme beings, Izanagi and Izanami, themselves the outcome of a series of semi-mystical, semi-realistic processes of evolution. By them the task of creation is undertaken. Matter already exists. With its origin the Japanese cosmographer did not attempt to deal. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* seemed to him an undeniable proposition, as it seemed to Moses also. But it was matter almost completely lacking consistency; unsubstantial, nebulous,

indescribable. Drops of this filmy thing falling from the point of Izanagi's spear crystallized into the first land, rising small and solitary from the "blue waste of sea." By that time the evolution of the creator and creatrix had attained such a stage that they were capable of procreation. They begot the islands of Japan, as well as a number of lesser divinities fash-



TOY MAKERS.

ioned after their own image. It is to be observed that the Japanese cosmographer did not rise to the idea of immaculate conception. He found the process of procreation sufficiently inscrutable, sufficiently miraculous, even as he knew it, to be worthy the great originators of all things, and he saw no occasion to explain a miracle by a miracle.

To the islands thus begotten a number of the new deities descended. These were the terrestrial divinities. At the outset the condition of the land born in the waste of waters was almost as that of the earth in the language of the Pentateuch — without form, and void, darkness brooding over the face of the deep. Then the god of fire is brought forth, his celestial mother expiring in travail. The creator follows her to the under-world, but fails to recover her, and, on his return, purifies himself by washing in the waves, during which process many new deities are evolved; chief among them the Goddess of the Sun (*Amaterasu*), but among them also a legion of evil spirits of pollution destined to afflict human beings through all ages. The eating of the forbidden fruit bequeathed to the Christian world its legacy of suffering and its awful doctrine of original sin. The violation of a law higher than his own mandates condemned Izanagi to become the father of his children's enemies.

It will be observed that the conception of cleanliness and the birth of light are synchronized in the Japanese system. Thereafter ensues an epoch during which the spirits of evil gain sway in the newly created world, confusion and tumult increase, until at last the creator delegates to the Sun Goddess the task of restoring peace and order. She despatches her nephew, Ninigi, to do the great god's bidding, and by him the terrestrial divinities are induced to surrender the sceptre, though they continue during centuries to struggle for power until Jimmu, the first mortal descendant of Ninigi, completes their subjugation.

In this cosmogony the birth of fire precedes that of light, but both constitute a part of the celestial transformation by which the earth passed from chaos to cosmos. Other pens, tracing the same story under other skies, might have constructed the version still reverentially taught in the nurseries and churches of the Occident — a world of indescribable matter, formless, void and dark; the creation of land and its separation from water; a sun called into existence to lighten and vivify; a long struggle, divided into six epochs by the inspired writers of the Old Testament, but of indefinite length in the Japanese cosmogony; finally, the appearance of man upon the scene and his acquisition of dominion.

It has been said that whosoever the earliest invaders of the Far-Eastern islands were, there is no more reason to suppose that they came to Japan without a religion than that they arrived there without a language. It has been also said by a learned sinologue that Amaterasu is identical with the Persian Mithras. A slightly increased strain upon the imaginative faculty might extend the line of Jimmu's ancestors to the city of Ur and the thirty-million-bricked temple of the Sun God; for if we once concede that the Japanese cosmogony is not indigenous but exotic, and if we begin to trace analogies between its outlines and those of some continental "revelation," or likenesses between the nomenclatures of the two, we shall soon arrive at startling results. Such speculations do not concern us here. Our business is to show what the Japanese believed, and how their beliefs influenced their lives.

Touching briefly upon these topics in a previous chapter, we pointed out the possibility of translating the semi-mythical traditions of old Japan into a vulgar record of aggressive invasions and defensive struggles, conflicts between the lust of conquest and the love of altar and hearth. Interesting as such interpretations prove to the historian, they must not



A CURBSTONE MERCHANT.

be allowed to exclude other considerations; for whatever secular facts may be embodied in these ancient cosmographies, they enshrine also the germs of Japan's primitive religion, *Shinto*, or "the Way of the Gods," as it came to be called when the presence of other creeds made a distinctive appellation necessary. Before we pass to a brief examination of the creed

let us turn for a moment to consider how its supernatural elements presented themselves to the national mind.

A common theory among foreign observers is that destructive criticism has never been permitted to invade the cosmogonical realm in Japan; that the basis of the national polity being the divine origin of the Emperor, any doubts thrown upon the traditions by which that genealogy is established would be counted treasonable. There is a large measure of truth in the supposition, but it is not the whole truth. If we except the persecutions of Christianity, which were altogether political, men did not suffer any penalty for their opinions in Japan. The celebrated scholar Arai Hakuseki published a work of strongly rationalistic tendencies in the beginning of the eighteenth century; and some sixty years later Ichikawa Tatsumaro wrote a brochure containing many of the criticisms that have been given to the world with such telling effect by modern sinologues.¹ It would not have been possible for any critic to attack more ruthlessly the principle of the Mikado's divine descent than Ichikawa attacked it. Yet he went unscathed; nay more, he and Arai received the high appreciation justly accorded to those who, through a sense of duty, oppose the strong current of popular opinion. With regard, on the other hand, to the faith of the believers in the bases of *Shinto*, it may be summed up in the words attributed by Byron to Athena's wisest son, "All that we know is, nothing can be known." "It is impossible for man with his limited intelligence," writes Motoori Norinaga,² "to find out the principles which govern the acts of the gods;" they "are not to be explained by ordinary theories." It is true that the traditions of the creation and of its divine directors, as handed down from antiquity, involve the idea of acts which, judged by the petty standards of human philosophy, are accounted miracles. But if the age of the gods has passed away, if they no longer work world-fashioning and heaven-unrolling wonders, none the less are we surrounded on all sides by inexplicable miracles. The suspension of the earth in space; the functions of the human body; the flight of birds and insects through the air; the blossoming of plants and trees; the ripening of seed and fruit,—do not these things transcend human intelligence as hopelessly as the begetting of matter and the birth of the sun? And if it be called irrational to believe in gods that are

¹ Ichikawa's view has been ably summarized by Sir Ernest Satow. He sets out by declaring that all unwritten traditions must be considered unworthy of belief, not only because they rest on the very fallible testimony of memory and hearsay, but also because the most striking, and therefore the most improbable, stories are precisely those most likely to be thus preserved. He then goes on to show that on the most favorable hypothesis the art of writing did not become known in Japan until a thousand years had separated the reign of the first mortal ruler from the compilation of the first manuscript record. He conjectures that "Amaterasu" was a title of comparatively modern invention. He contends that no cosmogony can be credible which makes vegetation antecedent to the birth of the sun. He declares unhesitatingly that the claim of sun genesis was probably invented by the earliest Mikados for political purposes. He denies that the gods in heaven make any racial distinctions, geographical conditions being alone responsible for such accidents. He refuses to accept any arithmetic of years when the calculators were men without cyclical signs or assisting script, and he concludes by declaring that if the ancestors of living men were not human beings, they are more likely to have been animals or birds than gods — by which last proposition he seems to indicate a belief in progressive evolution.

² This remarkable scholar and philosopher was born in 1730 and died in 1801. He is justly regarded by his countrymen as the greatest interpreter of their ancient faith. The brief review of his opinions given in the text is a summary of Sir Ernest Satow's analysis of his works in "The Revival of Pure *Shinto*." Nearly everything that we know of *Shinto* is due to the researches of Sir Ernest Satow.

invisible to human eyes, may we not answer that the existence of many things is unquestioningly accepted though our eyes cannot discern their shapes? Do we not know that sweet odors exist, and soft sounds; that the air caresses our cheek and that the wind blows over the sea? do we not know that fire is hot and water cold, though of the nature of heat and cold we know nothing? "The principles that animate the universe," writes Hirata Atsutane, "are beyond the power of analysis, neither can they be fathomed by human intelligence. All statements founded on pretended explanations of them are to be rejected. All that man can think out and know is limited by the power of sight, of feeling and of calculation. What transcends those powers lies beyond the potential range of thought."

We shall not pause here to fit foreign analogies to this suggestive framework of Japanese conceptions. But it must be noted that side by side with an attitude so humble toward the mysteries of nature there was an almost fierce assertion of Japan's claim to be the repository of revealed truth. "Our country," says Hirata Atsutane, "owing to the facts that it was begotten by the two gods Izanagi and Izanami; that it was the birthplace of the Sun Goddess, and that it is ruled by her sublime descendants for ever

and ever, as long as the universe shall endure, is infinitely superior to other countries, whose chief and head it is. Its people are honest and upright of heart, not given to useless theorizing and falsehoods like other nations. Thus it possesses correct and true information with regard to the origin of the universe, information transmitted to us from the age of the gods, unaltered and unmixed, even in the slightest degree, with unsupported notions of individuals. This is the genuine and true tradition." Here again we leave the reader to find, if he pleases, parallel examples of defiant confidence based on an equally small grain of mustard seed.

From what has thus far been written it will be seen at once that ancestor worship was the basis of *Shinto*. The divinities, whether celestial or terrestrial, were the progenitors of the nation, from the sovereign and the princes surrounding the throne to the nobles who



JAPANESE TYPES.

discharged the services of the State and the soldiers who fought its battles. The worship of these gods seems to have been originally conducted in the open air. Temples and shrines were not constructed until the first century before the Christian era. Very soon, however, the children of the deities found no lack of set places to pray, for from the *Naiko* and *Geko*



WINE SHOP.

of Ise, the Mecca of Japan, to the miniature *Miyas* that dotted the rice plains, thousands of shrines might be counted throughout the realm, and every house had its *Kami-dana*, a tiny *Shinto* altar, before which morning and evening prayers were said with unfailing regularity and devoutness. Many Western critics have alleged that *Shinto* is not a religion; that it

provides no system of morals, offers no ethical code, has no ritual, and does not concern itself about a future state. We shall deal presently with these assertions. Here we have only to say that, creed or cult, *Shinto* may certainly claim to have established a strong hold upon the heart of the people. The annual pilgrimages to the Shrines of Ise, where the Goddess of the Sun and the Goddess of Abundance are worshipped, attract tens of thousands of devotees each spring, and the renovation of the buildings every twentieth year¹ rouses the whole nation to a fervor of faith. Not a peasant believes that his farm can be productive, not a merchant that his business can thrive unless he pays, or honestly resolves to pay, at least one visit to Ise during his lifetime, and no household believes itself purged of sin unless its members clasp hands and bow heads regularly before the *Kami-dana*. *Shinto*, in truth, is essentially a family creed. Its roots are entwined around the principle of the household's integrity and perpetuity. Nothing that concerns the welfare of the family or the peace and prosperity of the household is too small or too humble for apotheosis. There is a deity of the caldron in which the rice is boiled as there is a deity of thunder; there is a god of the saucepan as there is a divinity of the harvest; there is a spirit of the "long-rope well" as there is a spirit of physical perfection. All the affairs of man are supposed to have a claim on the benevolent

¹ Being constructed of wood, the buildings are so perishable that instead of resorting to a process of constant repair, new edifices are erected on an alternate site every second decade.

WRESTLERS.

The wrestling matches are held in Tokyo twice every year during ten days in winter and ten days in spring—also at other times and places not fixed. The contestants are men of large physique and heavy build, many of them being over six feet tall and weighing more than 200 pounds. The ceremonial is quite elaborate and the rules peculiar. The winner must succeed in forcing his opponent outside the small ring in which the battle is fought, and the struggle is sometimes very energetic and entertaining.

APPENDIX

It is a well known fact that the human mind is not a blank slate, but is filled with a vast amount of information, which is constantly being processed and interpreted. This information is often stored in a form that is not easily accessible, and it is the task of the psychologist to help the individual to bring this information to the surface and to understand it. This is the purpose of the following exercises, which are designed to help the individual to explore his own mind and to discover the hidden meanings of his thoughts and feelings.



solicitude of these immortal guardians. In the ritual for invoking fortune on behalf of the Imperial palace at the time of building—the ritual of dedication—the spirits of rice and of timber are invoked, with the utmost precision of practical detail, to forefend the calamity of serpents crawling under the threshold, the calamity of birds flying in through the smoke-holes in the roof and defiling the food, the calamity of pillars loosening and joints creaking at night. On the other hand, all great affairs of State, all national enterprises, are similarly intrusted to the fostering care of the deities. As for rituals, details of ceremonial and rules for the guidance of priests and priestesses, they fill fifty volumes and descend to the utmost minutiae, the part taken by each functionary being carefully set forth, from that of the chief cook who laid on the fire and set the rice pot over it, or that of the superintendent of fisheries who fanned the flame, to that of the priest-noble who recited the ritual. The presentation of offerings to the tutelary deity or to the departed spirit just enrolled among the immortals formed an important part of the ceremonial, and the ritual used on the occasion enumerated the offerings,¹ while at the same time setting forth the grounds for paying reverence to the deceased. These funeral orations often rise to heights of remarkable pathos, dignity and beauty, and are read aloud by the chief priest in a manner at once simple and impressive.

However obscure the origin of some among the multitude of observances prescribed by the sacred canon, an analysis of the twenty-seven great rituals shows that the main purpose of worship was to secure the blessings of peace and plenty. The family on earth associated itself by offerings and orisons with the family in heaven. Among the whole twenty-seven rituals² one only is designed to avert the influence of evil spirits. It does not appear to have entered largely into the theory of the creed that enmities formed on this side of the grave continued to be active in the regions beyond. The disquieting contingency was there indeed. The curse of a dying foe might be fulfilled by his spirit after death, and services of exorcism were prescribed to meet the emergency. But this *tatari* was confined to the generation responsible for its origin. The general conception was that of kindly spirits, from the all-father and the all-mother to the shades of departed parents and relatives, ready to extend useful tutelage to their mortal descendants. The capacity to work injury after death was explained by a theory corresponding with the Occidental idea of the duality of man's nature. Every human being possessed a rough spirit and a gentle spirit. The former, when stirred to intense activity by a sense of suffering or the passion of resentment, acquired the potentiality of a mischievous agent acting independently of matter, and could even assume the shape of the sufferer or the avenger for the purpose of tormenting the injurer or the enemy. Such phenomena were not necessarily preceded by the liberation of the divine

¹ The offerings varied more or less, but generally included a bow, a sword, a mirror, a silk baldaquin, "bright cloth, glittering cloth, fine cloth and coarse cloth," *saké* jars, sweet herbs and bitter herbs, "things narrow of fin and wide of fin," etc., all of which, to use the language of the ritual, were "piled up like ranges of hills."

² The language of these rituals is sometimes full of fervor and eloquence. Their perusal, as translated by Sir Ernest Satow in "Ancient Japanese Rituals," will well repay the trouble.

element from its mortal prison: they might take place during life, and even without the knowledge of the person exercising the telepathic influence. Nor were they confined to the rough spirit. The gentle spirit also, under strongly emotional circumstances, became capable of defying the restraints of time and space. The permanent existence of evil gods, however, constituted an article of the faith. *Shinto* did not propound to its disciples the inscrutable problem of an omniscient, omnipotent and all-merciful deity creating beings foredoomed to eternal torture, and licensing a Satan to ply the trade of tempter and perverter. It adopted the simpler theory that the malign demons were the outcome of a fault of creation. Born of the corruption contracted by Izanagi during his visit to the land of the shades, these wicked spirits, who "glittered like fireflies and were as disorderly as spring insects; who gave voices to rocks, tree-stumps, leaves and the foam of the green sea,"¹ had been expelled from terrestrial regions but not annihilated: they continued to interfere mischievously in human affairs, and it was necessary to propitiate them with offerings, music and dancing. Their doings did not, however, seriously perturb the even tenor of daily life. There never was any tendency to regard the world as a battlefield of demons and angels, as was the case in mediæval Europe, or to entertain a Manichean belief in the frequent victories of evil spirits.

In the temples there were no images, nor was any object exposed to invite the adoration of the worshipper. Yet the presence of the tutelary deity was assumed, and, as evidence of the fact, a sacred pillow for the god's repose, or some other "august spirit-substitute," was enclosed within the shrine. Very often a mirror stands in the body of these temples, and foreign visitors generally suppose it to be an essential part of the visible paraphernalia. But it owes its presence in public to Buddhist influences: the rules of pure *Shinto* relegate it to the obscurity of the shrine. Two objects, however, are always openly associated with a *Shinto* shrine, the *go-hei* and the *torii*. The latter, as its name indicates,² was originally designed to typify a perch for birds. In *Shinto* traditions it is associated with the eclipse of the Sun Goddess. Outside the cave into which the goddess had retreated, cocks, collected by the gods, were set crowing to create the impression that even without the rising of the orb of day morn had dawned. Barn-door fowls thus found a place among the offerings to the goddess through all time, and the *torii* typified the fact. Its degradation in later ages to the rank of a gate is an error for which its shape is doubtless responsible, but it may generally be seen in its true rôle beside the little shrines of Inari³ where the peasant prays. The *go-hei*, or sacred offering, takes the form of a wand supporting a pendant of paper zigzags. It represents the coarse cloth and fine cloth that always appeared among the offerings. From symbolizing the concrete devotion of the worshipper and its abstract acceptance by the deity, the *go-hei*

¹Closely resembling the "Pottergeist" of the Germans and having some affinities with the "Pixies" of Anglo-Saxondom.

²From *tori* (a bird) and *i* (to rest, or perch).

³Thousands of these miniature shrines are to be seen in the rice-fields or in the vicinity of hamlets. They are erected in honor of the Spirit of Food. As to the name "Inari," it is said to be that of a place by some sinologues, but the general belief in Japan makes it a contraction of *ine-ninai*, or the rice-carrier. The fox is supposed to be an agent of the god; hence the stone foxes usually placed near the shrine.

became, by an easily conceived transition, an evidence of the favoring presence of the worshipped spirit, and in that character acquired powers of inspiration the exercise of which has been made the basis of a theory of esoteric *Shinto*.¹ From what has already been said about the "rough spirit" and the "gentle spirit," the reader will not be surprised to find in *Shinto* practices a repetition of

the phenomenon that has puzzled so many minds from the days of Njal and his *forspan* to those of Charcot and second sight. The *aura epileptica* blew in the old Japan and still blows in the new, as it has blown among all nations in all ages. Before *Shinto* shrines one may constantly see how what some folks call "mountain-moving faith," and



A VENDER OF AMISAKÉ.
A beverage somewhat milder than sake.

others more prosaically regard as an abnormal mood produced by concentrated attention and abeyance of the will—one may see that unconscious cerebration take the form of a hypnotic trance with telepathic capabilities, wonderful and inscrutable to vulgar minds. These "spirit-possessions" find their prototypes in the frenzy of the goddess that danced before the cave of the Sun Deity, and in the oracle-uttering mood of the Empress Jingo. Sometimes this idea that the spirits of the deified may be induced to obey the summons of their earthly relatives is played with by mercenary charlatans, as was and is the case in Europe; sometimes it appears to be capable of exciting a nervous ecstasy during which the body becomes insensible to pain. We need not dwell upon these things. They have their counterpart everywhere and can scarcely be regarded as distinctive of *Shinto*. Let us turn rather to the contention so often advanced, that *Shinto* has no code of morals and does not concern itself about a future state. As to the former argument, it is scarcely necessary to point out that the intuitive system of morality receives its fullest recognition when ethical sanctions are not coded. If man derives the first principles of his duties from intuition; if he be so constituted that the notion of right carries with it a sense of obligation, then a schedule of rules and regulations for the direction of every-day conduct becomes not only superfluous but illogical. That was the moral basis of *Shinto*. If the feet were kept steadfast in the path of

¹ Mr. Percival Lowell has published a delightfully written volume on this subject.

truth, the guardianship of the gods was assured even without praying for it. The all-creator took care when he fashioned man that a knowledge of good and evil should be an integral part of the structure. Unless such a knowledge be assumed, man becomes inferior to the animals, all of which have a guiding instinct, though its development is not equal to that of human beings. To have acquired the conviction that there is no ethical system to be learned and practised, is to have acquired the method of acting as the gods act. For the rest, precept is far inferior to example. The former suggests itself only when the latter is absent. Show a man a record of noble deeds actually performed, and he will burn with a desire to emulate them, whereas a statement of the principles of courage and loyalty will leave him comparatively unmoved. The gods are not to be importuned with prolix prayers, or asked to condone crimes knowingly committed. The petitions of humanity are wafted by the wind to the plain of high heaven:—"I say, with awe, deign to bless me by correcting the unwilling faults which, seen and heard by you, I have committed; by blowing off and clearing away the calamities which evil gods might inflict; by causing me to live long¹ like the hard and lasting rock, and by repeating to the gods of heavenly origin and to the gods of earthly origin the petitions which I present every day, along with your breath, that they may hear with the sharp-earedness of the forth-galloping colt." Such was the morning prayer to the Spirit of the Wind. Apart from the satisfaction of well-doing, uniform obedience to the dictates of conscience brought its reward. It is true that the rule did not always hold; the evil sometimes prospered while the good experienced misfortunes. That was because the "Spirits of Crookedness" were occasionally able to defy the "Spirits of Benevolence." But, on the whole, the hatred of the "Invisible Gods"² was assured to wrong-doers. Hirata Atsutane says "the deities bestow blessings and happiness on those who practise virtue as effectually as though they appeared before us bearing treasures. And even if the virtuous do not obtain material recompense, they enjoy exemption from disease, good fortune and longevity, and their descendants prosper. Pay no attention to the praise or blame of fellow-men, but act so that you need not be ashamed before the Gods of the Unseen. If you desire to practise true virtue, learn to stand in awe of the Unseen, and that will prevent you from doing wrong. Make a vow to the God that rules over the Unseen, and cultivate the conscience implanted in you, and thus you will never wander from the Way."

But if virtue might be expected to bring some recompense in this world, fear of eternal punishment did not reinforce the promptings of conscience, nor did hope of reward beyond the grave constitute a dominant incentive to well-doing. An under-world did, indeed, find a place in the system. The "August Creator" descended to it in search of his spouse after her demise in travail of fire. The god of the sea, weary of banishment from the heav-

¹It was believed that man depended on the wind for his breath.

²The terrestrial deities ruled over the "Unseen." They were the god O-kuni-nushi (who yielded the sovereignty of Japan to Ninigi) and his consort Suseri-bime. On them devolved the direction of everything that could not be ascribed to a definite author; as the tranquillity of the State, its prosperity, and the lives and fortunes of its people.

only plains, would fain have gone to his mother beneath the earth. The efficacy of the Sacred Jewel consisted in holding back the believer from the road to the region of the dead. But this under-world was not connected with any idea of merciless tortures inflicted on the damned through endless ages. It was simply the place of darkness — the moon, according to some, the depths of the ocean according to others. The finite was not followed by an infinite aftermath of misery. The worship of the beloved and revered dead precluded all idea of their condemnation to everlasting torment, just as it necessarily included the conception of the soul's immortality. Rituals were not read or offerings piled up to victims of annihilation. Those who passed the portals still lived, a larger, a more potential, a deathless life, waiting to be joined by those they had preceded. Within every man was something of the god, and though after death one obtained higher place than another in the divine hierarchy, all were sure of apotheosis.¹ The issue of human enterprises, the distribution of fortune's favors, were considered to be under the control of the tutelary deities, the ancestral spirits, but men were themselves endowed with capacity for distinguishing between good and evil, and with strength to follow their judgment so tenaciously as to qualify for fellowship with the denizens of high heaven. At the same time, error was theoretically avoidable and should therefore have been practically unpardonable, but sins might be expiated or forgiven. The sovereign occupied the position of the nation's high priest. Twice annually he celebrated the great festival of general

purification by which the people were purged of offences and pollutions and saved from consequent calamities. Every family also kept within the *Kami-dana* an amulet consisting of pieces of the sacred wand used at these festivals, the possession of the token being supposed to ward off the effects of evil-doing. The final use to which these pieces of wood were put is curious. They had to be exchanged every half year for new fragments,



HONCHO DORI, YOKOHAMA.

One of the principal business streets in the native section of the city.

¹ "The spirits of the dead," writes Hirata Atsutane in the *Tama no Mihashira*, "continue to exist in the unseen world, which is everywhere about us. They all become gods of varying character and degrees of influence. Some reside in temples built in their honor; others never leave their tombs. They continue to render service to their prince, parents, wife and children as when in the body." Elsewhere he says, "You cannot hope to live more than a hundred years under the most favorable circumstances, but as you will go to the unseen realm of O-kuni-nushi after death and be subject to his rule, learn betimes to bow down before him."

and the old were employed to light the fire under a bath for the virgin priestesses who danced at the festival of purification.

A striking feature of this creed was the high place it assigned to woman and the value it attached to female virtue. Of the cleanliness that it inculcated much has been written; of the lustrations that preceded every sacred rite; of the shrinking from every source of pollution and contamination; of the simplicity of every ceremonial apparatus; of the unvaried rusticity observed in the architecture of the temples, and of the unsculptured, unornamented purity of the timber used in their construction. It has been shown, too, in previous chapters that excessive dread of contamination led to violations of a far higher duty; that the sick were not duly tended and that the maimed or diseased were often thrust out to die. Charity, indeed, was a virtue scarcely suggested by the *Shinto* cosmogony and not inculcated by the rituals or ceremonials of the creed. Kindness to animals receives isolated recognition,¹ but "the golden rule" is not written between the lines of any prayer or any legend. The part assigned to woman, however, distinguishes *Shinto* from other Oriental cults or creeds, especially from the patriarchal system of the Chinese with which it is often confounded. In China a girl-child being disqualified to conduct ancestral worship, her birth is counted a misfortune and the preservation of her life a burden. In *Shinto* the principal objects of national adoration, the deities worshipped at the grand shrines of Ise, are the Sun Goddess and the Goddess of Food. Among the attributes assigned to the former, in addition to her prime functions, are those of selecting the guests or frequenters of the Emperor's abode, of correcting and softening discontent and unruliness, of keeping the male and female attendants in order, of preventing princes, councillors and functionaries from indulging their independent inclinations. At the foundation and construction of sacred buildings, young virgins cleared and levelled the ground, dug holes for the corner posts, took the axe and made the first cut in the trees to be felled for timber. A priestess was the central figure in the great ceremony of purification at the Kasuga temple; a young girl cleaned the shrine; women and girls on horseback moved in the procession. After the sacrificial vessels and chests of offerings followed carriages containing some of the Emperor's female attendants. Even the wind was under the control of a female deity as well as a male, for to the disciples of *Shinto* the wind did not present itself as a fierce, turbulent agent of nature, but rather as an ether filling the space between earth and sky, the ladder by which spirits ascended to

¹ A hare, desiring to cross from a mid-ocean island to the mainland, taunted the sea-sharks by alleging that its tribe numbered more than theirs. By way of practical test, it invited them to range themselves in line between shore and shore. That done, the hare, jumping from back to back and professing to count as it leaped, reached its desired destination. But untimely conceit prompted it to jeer before its feet were fairly planted on dry land, and by the last shark in the line its skin was torn off. As it lay writhing and weeping a band of deities approached. The elder brothers of O-kuni-nushi (the terrestrial ruler of Japan), they were journeying to pay court to Princess Yakimi of Inaba, whom they all loved. Observing the hare's misery, they bade it bathe in the brine of the sea and lie thereafter exposed to sun and wind; by which unkindly prescription the animal's sufferings were doubled. Presently O-kuni-nushi, who had been degraded by his brothers to the position of baggage-carrier, came along bearing his burden. He told the unhappy hare to wash in the fresh water of the river and roll its body in the pollen of the sedges, and being thus restored, it promised that he, not his brothers, should win the princess, which so fell out.

heaven. When Susa-no-o, expelled from the company of the gods, repaired to earth, his first exploit was to save a maiden from an eight-headed dragon which, year by year, had devoured one of her seven sisters. It was to a priest-princess that the Emperor Sujin intrusted the sacred mirror and sword after a divine revelation that they must no longer be kept in his own palace. It was by her niece, the subsequent depositary of the insignia, that the site of the Ise shrine was chosen. Virgin priestesses danced in honor of the gods of each locality, and the birth of three maidens from the fragments of the "Impetuous Male Deity's" sword was held to prove the purity of his intentions. From the earliest times, legendary or historical, the sovereign was surrounded by a number of females, and down to the reign of the present Emperor's immediate predecessor, women alone were admitted to the Imperial presence, in accordance with the belief that among the eight tutelary deities of the Mikado one represented the female influence surrounding the throne and imparting a gentle smoothness to the ruler's relations with the ruled.

The high rank accorded to woman in the *Shinto* system, the important functions assigned to her and the value attaching to virginal purity are thus amply proved. But while the beauty of virginity was recognized, no merit attached to celibacy. The maidens engaged in the service of the gods must preserve their chastity during the period of ministration, but after they had quitted the priesthood no obstacle stood in the way of their marriage. Neither do we find any direct or indirect inculcation of the principle of monogamy. On the contrary, the chief of the terrestrial deities when, by a display of pity to an animal, he had won the hand of a princess, for whose love he was his brothers' rival, made her his second wife and, moreover, became the father of many children by other women.

Shinto traditions offer no distinct precedent for a custom characteristic of the educated Japanese in all ages, the custom of resorting to suicide as an honorable exit from a humiliating or hopeless situation. One incident, indeed, may possibly be quoted as the prototype of the practice. The son of the chief terrestrial deity, when he decided to abandon his



EXTERIOR GALLERY OF JAPANESE TEMPLE.

right of succession in favor of the delegates of heaven, trod on the edge of his boat so as to overturn it, and with his hands crossed behind his back in token of submission, disappeared — abdicated and killed himself, in simpler language. We have no warrant for assuming, however, that the example of the deity had any influence in establishing the Japanese habit of anticipating surrender by suicide. Yet it is plain that a creed which divests death of all terrors by representing it as a prelude to apotheosis, must have helped to make suicide easy. But it should also have tended to impart to death the character of emancipation from the body's thralldom, whereas the history of the Japanese people does not show that escape from life ever presented itself seriously to cultured minds as euthanasia, a means of eluding the pangs of disease or preventing the dotage of age. Japan never had a Seneca or a Hegesias. A man did not abandon life because he counted the loss a blessing or a boon, or because he regarded the grave as a place of rest. When existence became an intolerable punishment, the victim of destitution or cruelty sometimes chose the last road to freedom, and it was a common habit of lovers, when all hope of union in life had disappeared, to die in each other's arms.¹ But we must look below the surface to discover causes responsible for the singular proneness to self-sacrifice that distinguished the Japanese *samurai* in all eras. Doubtless during the long centuries of warfare described in previous chapters, a certain indifference to death must have been educated by the constant necessity of inflicting it, and as in Rome before the time of Domitian, so in Japan before the *Meiji* era (1867), suicide secured a political offender against an ignominious fate and the confiscation of his goods. The influence of *Shinto* in this matter, however, is probably to be sought chiefly in the basis that it established for loyalty. The sovereign and all the princes of the blood as well as their noble scions were members of the *Kobetsu*; in other words, belonged to the tribe lineally descended from the celestial deities; the other heads of patrician families represented the offspring of the terrestrial deities, and were comprised in the *Shimbetsu*. The country was the country of the gods. No other State was entitled to equality with it. The mind of the Mikado was theoretically in perfect harmony of thought and feeling with the mind of the goddess, his ancestress. The Imperial functions, summed up in the common term, *matsuri-goto*, or "worshipping," were merely to pray for the people, to love them and to exact their obedience. The people had only one duty, to obey. Out of this belief there grew a passionate sense of loyalty, fealty and patriotism that led men to court death, not merely for the sake of averting immediately threatened ills from a sovereign or a liege lord, but even for the purpose of emphasizing a protest against courses that might produce ills. Faithful vassals, after fruitlessly exhorting their feudal chief against acts of misrule, injustice or dissipated excess, committed their advice to writing and sealed its sincerity with their blood. Parents sacrificed their children to save the sons of those to whom they owed allegiance. Retainers deliberately laid down their lives to avenge the wrongs of a deceased master.

¹ This is a complete answer to the shallow critics who allege that love, in the Occidental sense of the term, is not known in Japan.

We are here brought face to face with the question whether *Shinto* should be regarded as a creed indigenous to Japan or as an importation from abroad. Japan owed so much to China in early days that the borrowing of a creed would not have greatly increased the debt or seriously shocked any patriotic instinct. We have already seen that plausible grounds exist for attributing the bases of Japanese mythology to Chinese traditions, and the posthumous names of prehistoric *Mikados* to foreign sources. It must be confessed, however, that the process of differentiating the native from the alien is hampered by the constant difficulty of discerning whether the things adopted were actually Chinese systems or merely Chinese methods of systemization. A man taught to write after he reaches adult years is not unlikely to take the rules of literary composition and even the terminology of his teachers as well as their script, though the thoughts he sets down may be his own. That certainly was often the case with the Japanese, and it becomes necessary to look very closely before finally distinguishing the indigenous from the exotic. Thus Confucianism, a system of ethics widely embraced by the educated classes in Japan, has been credited with supplying some of the central ideas of *Shinto*, and the theory is superficially plausible. There had existed in China for centuries before the days of Confucius a belief in a supreme power and in the existence of some special channel of communication between that power and the ruler of the State, so that the latter acted as mediator for his subjects. The relation between the Emperor of Japan and the Sun Goddess

finds here an analogy. But Confucius would have set aside the *Shinto* cosmogony as something wholly beyond the range of rational speculation. He recognized the power of an impersonal heaven, but he limited his moral horizon to things visible and temporal, and his recorded conduct could not possibly be reconciled with



RAILWAY STATION AT YOKOHAMA.

the *Shinto* faith in the direction of nature's courses and of human fortunes by a hierarchy of deities. That man should devote himself earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings should keep aloof from them—that was the Confucian definition of wisdom. He did not, as is frequently supposed, institute the worship of ancestors; it had

existed in China for centuries before his time. He did not even directly inculcate the propriety of such a practice. As to a future state he declined to predicate anything about the world beyond the grave. He did not even commit himself to an admission that sentient existence might be continued after death. Life was a mystery in his eyes; death equally inscrutable.



MT. FUJI.

In the vague possibilities of numbers and diagrams he vainly sought an explanation of the phenomena of the physical universe, and the sole outcome of his cosmical studies was a discovery that if the span of his life permitted fifty years' uninterrupted groping among the pages of the Book of Changes (*Yih King*) he might hope to reach the truth. In one important

respect his philosophy corresponded with *Shinto*: it was inductive. The rule of life for men in all their relations was to be found within themselves; heaven had conferred on every human being a moral sense, compliance with which would keep him always in the right path. He did not recognize, however, that consideration for woman and her chivalrous treatment should be catalogued among the promptings of conscience. With the high place assigned to woman in the *Shinto* cosmogony and the *Shinto* ceremonials he would have been absolutely unsympathetic. Confucianism, in short, was pure secularism. Faithful followers of the Chinese sage lived as units of their families, thoughtless of a hereafter, and persuaded that the recompense of their acts would be found, if not in their own fortunes, then in those of their descendants.

It is thus easy to see how greatly Confucianism differed from *Shinto*, while, at the same time, both had much in common. We have here alluded to the similarities and dissimilarities of the two systems, not simply for the sake of establishing the independence of *Shinto*, but also, and mainly, because, from the time of Japan's first acquaintance with Chinese literature, Confucianism won for itself a firm place in the minds of her educated classes. It came to her strengthened and supplemented by the genius of Mencius, and in some respects it supplied an evident want. *Shinto*, providing no moral code, and relying solely on the promptings of conscience for ethical guidance, was too much of an abstraction

TEACHING SONGS.

The singing girls, or geisha, receive their instruction from teachers belonging to families hereditarily intrusted with the handing down of their art. There is no musical notation for popular music. An attempt was made to introduce one about the middle of the last century; but the teachers thought their means of livelihood was threatened, and successfully opposed the innovation.



to satisfy the ordinary mind. Confucianism, as elaborated by Mencius, offered a system of morals avowedly based on inductive sanctions yet evidently indorsed by the lessons of experience. To a profound belief in the innate goodness of human nature it added plain expositions of the four fundamental virtues, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. It taught that the first aim of administration should be the material good of the people; the second, their education. It indicated divine ordination in human affairs, and defined death in the discharge of duty as compliance with that ordination, a disgraceful death as a departure from it; which canon secured implicit obedience from the Japanese in every age. It bade men regard suffering and misfortune as Heaven's instruments for stimulating the mind, bracing the heart and compensating defects—a precept to which the Japanese owe much of their stoicism in adversity and their cheerfulness in poverty. It defined society as a compound of five relationships—sovereign and subject; husband and wife; father and son; elder brother and younger brother; friend and friend; the first four linked together by the principle of righteous and benevolent rule on the one side, and righteous and sincere submission on the other; the last by the mutual desire of promoting virtue. Side by side with these and other equally noble bases of ethics, it laid down an axiom which never obtained open indorsement in Japan, but which any reader following our historical retrospect in previous chapters must have again and again detected underlying the conduct of prominent actors upon the political stage. Confucius and Mencius alike held that the throne is an institution of heaven, but what the former's teaching only implied, the latter's boldly formulated, namely, that the claim of "divine right" ceases to be valid unless it inures to the people's good. The people were the most important element in the Chinese Sage's concep-



BOAT BRIDGE AT NAKASENDO.

tion of a nation. If the sovereign's rule were injurious to them, he must be dethroned. No Japanese in any epoch would have subscribed to such a doctrine in its naked outlines. Yet in practice it received constant though limited obedience, and the methods of obedience show striking conformity with the sequence of Mencius's prescriptions. For the philosopher laid

down that the task of removing an unworthy ruler should be undertaken, first, by a member of the ruler's family; secondly, by a high minister acting purely with a view to the public weal; and, thirdly, failing either of these, by some subordinate "instrument of heaven." Mencius did not inculcate sedition, regicide or open violence; the standard to be raised was that not of rebellion but of righteousness. In turning over the pages of Japan's annals have we not repeatedly seen that, while the "divine right" was uniformly recognized in theory, prince after prince, minister after minister, subordinate after subordinate did not scruple to contrive the compulsory retirement of sovereign, *Shogun*, or feudal chief, easily persuading himself, or being honestly forced by circumstances to believe, that his own elevation to the place of the deposed ruler would make for the good of the people? *Shinto* educated no such tendency. Buddhism did not educate it. Whence, then, its origin but in Chinese philosophy?¹ It has become crystallized in the ethics of the nation. Scarcely a Japanese, however lowly his origin or humble his station, lacks the conviction that he carries a natural mandate to redress wrong in a superior, and that the method of redress depends upon his own choice, provided that his failure in "submission" be compensated by strength of "sincerity"—the co-ordinates of loyal obedience. Practical illustrations of this characteristic will meet us presently in the field of modern Japanese politics, but it has seemed proper to set down the ethical fact here in the context of the philosophy from which it appears to have been derived. It is seen that Japan received from China a philosophy only. Her religion was her own, in so far as a future state, the immortality of the soul, the cosmogony and the providence of the gods were concerned.

If the reader asks why we venture to attribute to Chinese philosophy imported into Japan results that did not attend its propagandism in the land of its origin, we can only answer that the same seed may produce dissimilar fruit in different soils. The point might easily be elucidated, but it lies beyond the scope of our story.

The heading of this chapter will be seen to suggest a connection between the religious creed of the nation and the castes into which society was divided, and the suggestion has doubtless been strengthened by our passing reference to the *Kobetsu*, or tribe to which the sovereign and princes of the blood belonged—in other words, the tribe including all descendants of the Celestial Deities—and the *Shimbetsu*, or tribe composed of descendants of the Terrestrial Deities. Both traced the root of their genealogical tree to common ancestors, Izanagi and Izanami, but the *Kobetsu* represented the offspring of heaven at the brightest stage of its productive faculties, when the sun came into being, whereas the *Shimbetsu* owed their origin to an era when the lower forces of nature were evolved. Translating the myth

¹Motoori Motonaga, the celebrated exponent of "Pure Shinto" in the eighteenth century, indorses the above view which we have arrived at by direct comparison of the Chinese philosophy and Japanese history. He says that the ethics enumerated by the Sages of China may be reduced to two simple rules, "take other people's territory and hold it fast when you've got it," and he distinctly attributes to the influence of Chinese learning the contumacy shown toward the *Mikado* in the middle ages by the Hojo, the Ashikaga and others. He might have greatly extended his list and carried it back much farther.

into workaday words, it takes the form that the invaders of Japan, in the sixth century before the Christian era, found the islands already inhabited by men of such fine fighting qualities that mutual respect grew out of the struggle between the two, and the vanquished received in the new hierarchy a position little inferior to that assumed by the victors. Almost

from the outset the two races intermarried, and as early as the first century before the Christian era, temples dedicated to the principal deities of each were taken under State tutelage, the sun, which the invaders worshipped, being placed at the apex of the pantheon, and the common gods of every-day life, the controllers of natural phenomena, being relegated to a lower, yet still



NIOMON IWEMITSU TEMPLE AT NIKKO.

divine, rank. There is evidence that this liberal policy was not adopted without a struggle, but with that we need not concern ourselves here. The chiefs of the two great tribes were priests as well as rulers. At the head of all stood the Mikado, the *Suberagi* of ancient nomenclature, who, within the precincts of the palace and by occasional visits to the principal shrines, performed religious rites on behalf of the nation's welfare; and immediately after him in order of dignity came the great families of Nakatomi, representing the *Kobetsu*, and Mononobe and Shimbe, representing the *Shimbetsu*. The heads of these houses possessed the right of disposing of the lives and properties of the members, and the same right devolved upon the heads of the various branches into which the original household became divided as time elapsed. The Nakatomi traced their descent to one of the principal councillors attached to the grandchild of the Sun Goddess when he descended to assume the rule of Japan; the Shimbe, to the deity that held the mirror and the *go-hei* before the cave on the immemorial occasion of her self-effacement; the Mononobe, to Susa-no-o himself. If the reader desires to remain serious in the presence of these statements, let him refresh his memory of the genealogical tables set out in the Old Testament. As for us, our business is merely to furnish interpretations of Japanese systems and Japanese ideas, not to depict a Garden of Eden without a serpent. Into whatever cloud-land of myth and marvel the line of these patriarchal families ascends, their title to divine origin has received the

assent of all generations of Japanese, and the links that connect their pedigrees with our own prosaic era will be detected when we say that a branch of the Nakatomi changed their name to Fujiwara,¹ in the seventh century, an epoch at which administrative functions began to interest them more than sacerdotal; that they were subsequently separated into the five governing families (*Go-Sekke*); that up to the centralization of the administration in 1868 the nominal prime minister of every sovereign after he came of age, and the regent during his minority, belonged to the Fujiwara; that the Mononobe family has eight representatives among the present nobility, one of them being the celebrated Count Katsu, who played such a conspicuous part in the Restoration of 1867; and that no hereditary *Shinto* official (*Kannushi*) of this *Meiji* era entertains or admits any doubt of his ancestors' consanguinity with some deity, great or small.

Of such materials is the Japanese nobility of to-day composed, for from some *Kobetsu* or *Shimbetsu* family all the holders of hereditary titles in modern times can trace their descent. If, however, there have been very blue-blooded patricians in Japan from the earliest days of its written history, there have also been very humble plebeians, and their story has at least as much human interest as the record of intriguing statesmen and ambitious captains.

When Ieyasu, the Tokugawa chief of whom so much has already been said, obtained control of the administration, the nation was divided into five castes—the Imperial family, the *ku-ge* or Court nobles, the *bu-ke* or military nobles, the *hei-min* or commoners, and the *sem-min* or despicable people. This order had been evolved by processes too complicated and various to be discussed here. The *ku-ge* resided in Kyoto within the shadow of the throne. They held various sinecures, but their active functions did not extend beyond performing and transmitting the elaborate ceremonials of which the Court was the centre. All the administrative duties were discharged by the *bu-ke*, in whose hands the temporal power rested absolutely. To meet the expenses of the Court the Tokugawa *Shogun* assigned an annual income of 30,000 *koku* of rice and from 30,000 to 500,000 *riyo* in money; allowances aggregating about a million *yen* of the present currency. For the whole body of *ku-ge*, however, numbering 139 families, the allowance was only 70,000 *koku* of rice, the most richly endowed house (*Konoike*) having 2,860 *koku* (representing about 35,000 *yen*). When it is remembered that the *Shogun* himself had an income of 4,283,400 *koku* (over 50 million *yen*) and that the 18 principal *bu-ke* nobles enjoyed revenues varying from 150,000 to more than a million *koku* (1¼ million to 12 million *yen*), the striking difference between the pecuniary positions of the *ku-ge* and the *bu-ke* becomes apparent. The life of the Court noble, in fact, was generally one of dignified and often grinding poverty. He had to eke out his scanty income by engaging in domestic industries such as were deemed appropriate to genteel indigence, for example,

¹It may be accepted as a historical fact that eight names instituted by the Emperor Temmu at the close of the seventh century corresponded pretty closely with our modern idea of titles of nobility. For example, members of the *Kobetsu* who became governors of provinces, received the name *Nabito*. Members of the same tribe hitherto called *Omi* were thenceforth designated *A-son*. Members of the *Shimbetsu* previously called *Muraji*, became *Suku-ne*, and so on. We have not space to deal with such matters in detail.

the shaping of chop-sticks and the decoration of playing cards. The *ku-ge* now occupy due places among the five modern orders of nobility, prince, marquis, count, viscount and baron, but poverty is still written in very visible ink across the backs of their patents of nobility. The *hei-min*, or commoners, consisted of the farmers, artisans, and merchants. They could not look back through long centuries to ancestors of either celestial or terrestrial divinity. They had not even the poor privilege of designating themselves by family names. As folks in England or America call a butler "James" or a coachman "John," so the gentry of old Japan spoke of "ironmonger Tarobei," or "haberdasher Sensaburo," and when Tarobei or Sensaburo chanced to meet the cortège of a nobleman *en route*, the "common fellow" had to kneel with his head in the dust until the last of the sworded retainers had passed. If he suffered from oppression at the hands of the local magnate in whose territory he worked he must suffer in silence; complaint to a higher power involved the penalty of death.¹ There was, however, one notable compensation. Despite their degraded status the commoners managed to amass wealth. Here it should be observed that poverty was never any reproach in Japan. As a general rule the Japanese trouble themselves very little about one another's possessions. A conspicuously rich man is conspicuous, but a poor man is never poor so long as he remains respectable. Nothing conduces so largely to the grace of social intercourse in Japan as this absolute absence of the snobbism of wealth. How far back we must go for the first examples of

this beautiful trait, or to what moral teaching it owes its origin, the Japanese themselves do not pretend to know. But the *samurai*, as tradition faithfully describes him, always despised money and spurned the notion of toiling to amass it. Fealty and courage were his idols, self-sacrifice his ideal, and since the *samurai* gave society its tone,

we can understand that even a Court noble, a scion of the gods, toiling in the seclusion of his lowly home to win rice and vegetables for his children, violated no canon of dignity



SHOTOYEN GARDEN, SAKAWA VILLAGE, TOKAIDO.

¹ This fact forms the nucleus of a celebrated record of Japan in the first half of the seventeenth century. Sogoro, a village head-man, presented to the Shogun a petition protesting against the exactions of the Sakura *daimyo's* retainers. The petition effected its object, but Sogoro, his wife and three children were executed.

nor disturbed any estimate of the great *comme il faut*. But the commoner was always a commoner, by whatever standard of patrician ethics he regulated his doings, and since he was condemned to delve and spin he naturally valued the only reward that such operations could bring him. Among the *hei-min*, therefore, men of great substance were to be found. Kino-kuni-ya Bunzaemon, a merchant who flourished at the close of the seventeenth century, lived within a three-acre park in the most populous district of Tokyo. Yodoya Tatsugoro of Osaka inhabited a mansion covering 14,200 square yards, surrounded by a nine-acre garden, owned forty warehouses, possessed four detached villas, and employed a hundred and fifty domestic servants. Kiya Goemon of Kaga, whose property was confiscated in consequence of his having violated the veto against foreign trade, was found to be worth 3,980,000 *riyo*, equivalent to over 30 million *yen* of modern money. Thus the *hei-min* had his compensations, especially the farmer, who not infrequently was raised to the rank of a retainer, and suffered to carry the distinguishing badge of a gentleman — two swords.

Who the "commoners" were originally, research does not indicate. One not unreasonable conjecture is that they belonged to a race of immigrants antecedent to either of the invading tribes represented by the *Kobetsu* and the *Shimbetsu* — a conjecture consistent with what has been written in a previous chapter about the marked physical differences between the plebeian and patrician types. Below them stood the "servile people;" so far below that a general epithet, *ryo-min*, or respectable people, differentiated all other sections of the nation from these outcasts of society. Yet the *sem-min*, as the proletariat were called, have a special claim on our attention, for, as we shall by and by see, they are connected with the origin of some of the most picturesque phases of Japanese life. The literal meaning of the word *sem-min* is "despised people," but since close affinities may be traced between the condition and occupations of this class and those of the Roman *servi*, the term "serf" seems apposite here.

It has been laid down as a principle by ethnologists that slavery never constitutes a vital element of any social system in which a theocratic organization is established. Communities where the military order has obtained the ascendancy are the natural home of caste divisions which relegate the industrial and agricultural functions to serfs and slaves. We have traced a partial vindication of that theory in the story of the Japanese, among whom the tillers of the soil, the mechanic and the trader ranked as plebeians, or commoners, in comparison with the military patricians. But if the polity of Japan partook largely of the military character, it was purely theocratic in its alleged beginnings, and thus the social problems connected with it refuse to be solved by precedents derived from simpler organizations. The "commoners" (*hei-min*) certainly were not serfs or slaves, according to any acknowledged rendering of those terms, and even the "servile people," while some of them may unquestionably be classed as slaves, do not find their exact counterpart in any system that has come under the notice of Western historians. As far back as the middle of the fifth

century of the Christian era Japanese annals refer to *sem-min*. They show us a nobleman who, being convicted of plotting against the Court (460 A. D.), was condemned to death, his posterity for eighty generations being degraded to the rank of common laborers. Thenceforth, various incidents, legal enactments and ordinances enable us to detect six causes which operated to produce *sem-*

min; namely, crime, subjugation, debt, special circumstances of birth, naturalization and kidnapping. Treason in every form and armed conquest were sources of State slaves, corresponding to the Roman *servi publici*. A rebel or a conspirator against the sovereign suffered death, frequently shared by his sons and brothers, and all the rest of his



HAFUYA HOTEL, HAKONE.
Facing Hakone Lake, opposite Fujiyama

family as well as his property were confiscated. As for conquest, the rights conferred by it held against Japanese as well as against aliens. Raids made by Japanese generals into the Korean peninsula resulted in the capture of numerous Koreans who, being carried to Japan, were drafted into the ranks of the *sem-min*, and employed in various menial capacities. Probably also, though here we cannot speak with assurance, sections of the aboriginal inhabitants of Japan suffered the same fate after subjugation by the invaders, for, as our retrospect of history suggests, tribes not able to claim affinity with the *Kobetsu* or the *Shimbetsu* and yet declining to acknowledge the latter's authority until compelled to do so, were not likely to fare better than rebellious subjects of divine consanguinity. If the celebrated feud between the princely clans of Mononobe and Soga in the middle of the sixth century resulted in the sentencing of two hundred and seventy-three members of the Mononobe to perpetual servitude at a temple, contumacious autochthons certainly obtained no gentler terms. Turning now to debt as a source of serfdom, we observe that in very early eras its influence must have been considerable, for at the close of the seventh century the sovereign found it necessary to impose restrictions. Proclamation was then made that where a creditor prescribed serfdom as a penalty for failure to discharge a monetary obligation, interest must not be charged. Later on, the first code—promulgated at the beginning of the eighth century—sanctioned the principle that an insolvent debtor's person might

become the property of the creditor, but imposed legal limits of interest. Interest payable every sixtieth day was not to exceed one eighth of the principal, and even though a period of 480 days had elapsed, an amount of interest greater than the principal must not be exacted. The issue of serfs remained a serf, but, by a curious stretch of liberality, an immigrant from a foreign land who had been a serf in his own country, acquired his freedom on touching Japanese soil, though if he subsequently suffered degradation, any of his relatives following him to Japan shared his fate. The abduction and kidnapping of men and women and their sale into serfdom were practices against which laws had to be enacted in the eighth century. The crime was punished by a maximum penalty of three years' penal servitude. But here we find evidence of the large recognition accorded to rights of relationship, for the closer the degree of consanguinity between the person sold and the seller, the milder the penalty. A man selling his own parent or cousin became liable to two and a half years' penal servitude, but the sale of one's own child or grandchild involved only one year of punishment, and if the sale was that of a daughter, the law did not undertake to rehabilitate her.¹

The co-operation of these various causes must have produced a considerable number of *sem-min*, and, indeed, the best statistics available indicate that the ratio was five per cent of the total population.² But it must not be supposed that the treatment of these serfs in Japan displayed cruelties like those practised in ancient Rome. There were five classes: guards of the Imperial sepulchres, servants employed in administrative offices, domestic servants, State serfs and private serfs. Men belonging to the first two classes differed little from ordinary subjects, and were often rehabilitated. They had establishments of their own and could acquire property. Domestic serfs might be described, not incorrectly, as poor relatives who, generation after generation, earned a livelihood by performing menial household duties in families to which they were bound by ties of kith and kin. It seems a misnomer to call such persons "serfs," but they were so classed in old Japan. State serfs were captives made in war, or the domestic serfs—that is to say, the indigent relatives—of men convicted of offences involving degradation and confiscation. The lot of these serfs was ameliorated, rather than aggravated, by transfer to the State. Private serfdom seems to have been the worst condition of all. The private serf was bought and sold like any ordinary chattel, the only proviso being that the transaction must be duly registered. But the lash was not used to compel work, nor is there any record that the idea of chaining a serf ever suggested itself to a Japanese householder or official. It would appear, too, that the prospect

¹ With regard to the price at which a serf was valued, there is documentary evidence preserved among the archives of the Nara Court (eighth century). Three males, aged respectively 34, 22 and 15, were sold, the first two for a thousand sheaves of rice each, the third for seven hundred sheaves. Three females, aged 22, 20 and 15, sold at the same time, were appraised, the first two at eight hundred sheaves each, the last at six hundred. A hundred sheaves of rice represent a *koku*, which was equivalent to 1 *riyo* at that era, and now sells for 13 *yen*. Thus an adult male serf was valued at about 130 *yen*, and a female at about 100 *yen*.

² The population of Japan in the middle of the eighth century is estimated to have been 3,694,331, the ratio of the male and female elements being as 4.6 to 5.4. There were then 84,970 male serfs and 99,737 female.

of an aged person's dying without having tasted the sweets of freedom revolted ancient legislators. They enacted that if a State serf attained the age of 66, or became incapacitated by disease, he should be promoted to be an official employee, and at 76 he was rehabilitated. Even a man who had been degraded for treason was restored to his old status when he reached the age of eighty. Other causes of manumission were emancipation,¹ judgment of a law court, extinction of a master's family, adoption of the Buddhist priesthood and meritorious service. A Buddhist priest had no social status; thus a serf entering the priesthood necessarily passed outside the pale of serfdom. But despite this disposition to lighten the lot of the serf, stringent measures were adopted to preserve the distinctions of caste. Nothing save the pride of rank prevented intermarriages between the military class and the commoners (*hei-min*). If, however, a member of the *bu-ke* or the *hei-min* married into the *sem-min*, the offspring of the union became a serf. Even among the serfs themselves, difference of grade originally constituted a barrier to marriage.² These harsh enactments received modification at the beginning of the ninth century. Thenceforth the issue of a mixed marriage received the status of whichever parent stood higher in the social scale. But the spirit of exclusiveness underwent no change, and there is also evidence that in the long mediæval era of incessant war the practice of kidnapping young persons of both sexes and selling them into serfdom constituted one of the prominent abuses of the age. To the credit of the Tokugawa rulers stands the enactment of really drastic regulations against this evil. Capital punishment was prescribed by them for the kidnapper, and imprisonment with heavy fines for the agent of the abductor or the buyer of the abducted. The somewhat detailed nature of our reference to this matter is not merely because it has hitherto been virtually excluded from the purview of writers on Japan, but because its moral and social effects cannot be omitted from



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¹Emancipated serfs were exempt from taxation during a period of three years from the date of rehabilitation.

²The reader will observe that a serf marriage was legally recognized. It was not a mere *contubernium*, as in Rome. In many respects, as indeed might be expected, the condition of the serf or slave in Japan resembled that of his predecessor in Athens.

any ethical study of the nation, and because it will meet us by and by in other and unexpected directions.

It has thus been shown that the patrician sections of the nation had their creed and their cult. They enjoyed the guardianship of the celestial and terrestrial divinities from whom they claimed descent and to whose ranks they would be admitted after death, and they obeyed an inductive system of morality which, though lacking codified tenets, certainly tended to produce a high type of character and to nurture a happy faith in the possibilities of a future state. But the *hei-min* and the *sem-min*, the commoners and the serfs, what religion did they embrace? Some of them, especially the farmers and artisans, might consider that they belonged to the congregation of *Shinto* worshippers; but others were effectually excluded since they lacked the essential qualification of consanguinity with the deities. Looking at the sharp lines of caste cleavage that divided both *hei-min* and *sem-min* from the patrician class it is difficult to avoid the inference that all these commoners and serfs stood originally outside the pale of the invaders' creed. At any rate, if their places in the hierarchy of the hereafter were to be regulated by their stations in the society of the present, the life beyond the grave cannot have presented to them a very smiling aspect.

To a nation thus constituted Buddhism came in the second half of the sixth century. We shall not here pause to consider the manner of its coming or the story of its early struggles. Still less shall we attempt to analyze the original religion itself. Buddhism resembles that house of many mansions on which the hopes of so many and so many-minded sections of Christian humanity are fixed with equal assurance that each has found the truth. In its library of over two thousand sutras, one of which, translated into Chinese, is twenty-five times as large as the whole Christian Bible, every searcher after the great verity may find materials to construct a creed according to the pattern of his own intellectual and emotional nature, and none can confidently assert that upon him alone the light of inspiration has shone, for none dare pretend to imagine that his researches have been exhaustive. It is here that we find the explanation of the tranquil tolerance amid which the various sects of Buddhism have been evolved. It is here, too, that we find a special interest in the faith, for by inviting eclecticism it becomes a mirror of its interpreter's mind. In each vessel of water drawn from the well where Buddhist truth lies so profoundly buried we see a reflection of the drawer's moral features, and it follows that if we could trace accurately the developments received by Buddhism and the changes it has undergone during the twelve hundred years of its active existence in Japan, we should find ourselves looking very closely at the genius of the Japanese people and at the guiding spirit of their civilization. Such a task, if fully performed, would assume immense dimensions. Yet some of its most important results may be sketched without exhausting the reader's patience, as we hope to show in our next chapter.



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